

Distance Learning survey identifies ways we can help

When a military student enrolls in a distance learning course, we generally see two and sometimes three documents – an enrollment form, usually a Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form, and a grade report. These don't tell us much about your students, and tell us even less about their satisfaction with the service we provide. Since we need additional information to better manage the program, we conducted a survey.

We used the DANTES tuition assistance (TA) database to identify potential participants and send out the survey forms. We included self-addressed, postage-paid return envelopes with the questionnaire.

We surveyed a random sample of Service members who enrolled in distance learning courses that started between 1 October 1999 and 30 September 2000. Samples

were taken from the total participant population and were not limited to those who successfully completed a course. In addition, we did not specify branch, so we obtained responses from both active duty and Reserve component Service members.

We received responses from those who were pleased with their experience and planned to take more distance learning courses. We also received responses from those who did not like distance learning courses. We received kudos, as well as thoughtful and constructive criticism. The students offered a range of comments and suggestions.

We mailed out 650 surveys. Sixty were returned by the US Postal Service as undeliverable. We received 107 completed forms for a return rate of 18 percent. Below is a summary of what we learned:

92 percent rated their overall experience Excellent, Very Good, or Good.

Those responding were generally happy with the service provided by the school, DANTES, the installation Voluntary Education Program, and the office that paid the TA.

Half of those responding contacted the DANTES offices in Pensacola about something related to their course.

Choosing a school was not much of a factor. Most of those responding already had a school in mind when they chose the school in which they enrolled.

Most (89 percent) found the DANTES Enrollment form easy to fill out; and most (73 percent) felt the process went smoothly. However, looking at the negative aspects of these figures, 11 percent found the Enrollment Form difficult to fill out; 9 percent did not understand the TA application process; and 27 percent did not feel the process went smoothly.

Most of those responding (60 percent) gave "could not attend on campus" as the reason for enrolling in a distance learning course; most (88 percent) indicated they would enroll in another distance learning course.

The recommendations/comments section produced helpful information. While we received both positive and negative comments, we received 12 negative comments regarding payment of tuition assistance; most of these had to do with the length of time it took to be reimbursed.

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CCAF welcomes new commander

On 29 April, the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF) welcomed Colonel Eric Ash as its 12th



Colonel Ash

commander and president. The world's largest community college system, CCAF is federally chartered to provide career-related Associate in Applied Science degree programs to enlisted personnel, conferring more than 10,000 degrees annually.

In addition to receiving a new commander, CCAF also celebrated 30 years of service in April, having recently returned

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Distance Learning

DANTES Distance Learning news

DANTES External Degree Catalog update

Add the following to the schools affiliated with DANTES:

Baptist College of Florida

5400 College Drive

Graceville, FL 32440

(850) 263-3261

Toll free: 800-328-2660

Fax: (850) 263-7506

E-mail: mail@baptistcollege.edu

Internet: <http://>

www.baptistcollege.edu

DANTES Independent Study Catalog update

Add the following to the schools affiliated with DANTES:

University of Florida

Division of Continuing Education

2209 NW 13th Street, Suite D

Gainesville, FL 32606

(352) 392-1711

Toll free: 800-327-4218

Fax: (352) 392-6950

E-mail: learn@doce.ufl.edu

Internet: <http://>

www.CorrespondenceStudy.ufl.edu

For information about distance learning courses offered by University of Florida, refer to their web site or write them to ask for a catalog. Their courses will be included in the next edition of the *DANTES Independent Study Catalog*.

DANTES Catalog of Nationally Accredited Distance Learning Programs update

Institute of Logistical Management

The following courses have been added to their curriculum:

Transportation Law I – Rail and Motor Carrier

Tuition: \$630

Other Fees Not Covered by TA: \$95

Total: \$725

Transportation Law II – Ocean, Air, Multimodal, Intermediaries, and International

Tuition: \$630

Other Fees Not Covered by TA: \$95

Total: \$725

Tuition assistance help available

Students needing assistance tracking their tuition assistance (TA) payments should send an E-mail to tahelp@voled.doded.mil.

To expedite handling, please have students put their branch of Service and Reserve component, if appropriate, in the subject line. In the body of the message, include sufficient personal identifying information, the course information (such as ENG 101), and specific questions.

We will respond to the E-mail inquiries as quickly as possible. Making this change will help reduce the high volume of telephone calls we receive.

Personnel changes in Tuition Assistance

You may notice some new names and voices in the Distance Learning Tuition Assistance program. We welcome Kathy Shumack and Donna Sumlin, who are replacing Myrtice O'Dell and Anna Johnson. Also, two additional part-time employees, Mike Bosinger and Shannon Taylor, came onboard 15 April. We continue to grow to meet the needs of our customers.

SURVEY

FROM 1

Partially in response to these comments we have added additional contract staff to assist us in speeding up the payment process. In addition to the comments about tuition assistance, we received seven comments regarding difficulty in getting information about various aspects of the program. This identified a need to make Service members more aware of additional sources of information such as the DANTES web site, DANTES Distance Learning Program catalogs, and the various pamphlets and brochures describing the Distance Learning Program.

The bottom line seems to be that things work smoothly and students have a positive experience when everyone understands how the process works, including the length of time it takes to get paid. When there is an information gap and participants don't understand the process or aren't aware of sources of information—catalogs, publications, and the DANTES web site, not to mention representatives of the Voluntary Education Program—the experience can be frustrating. With your help, we will work on getting the word out and closing the information gap.

Calendar

June

7	Excelsior Extended Response (Essay)
10	LSAT
15-19	Praxis*

July

15-19	CLEP General English Composition w/Essay*
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August

2	Excelsior Extended Response (Essay)
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September

21-25	Praxis*
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Notes:

Overseas test centers send orders 6 weeks before the test date. Conus test centers send orders 4 weeks before the test date. Contractors ship tests to arrive just before the planned test date.

*Select only one test date from the published period for DANTES testing and specify that date on the order form.

<http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/exam/01-02htm>

Reminder: The SAT Program shuts down scoring in late summer. Do not schedule SAT testing in July/August. See DEPH SAT Chapter 3.

Quarterly inventory reports due 19 July

The quarterly Test Inventory report from stocking test centers for the quarter ending 30 June is due at the DANTES testing agencies no later than 19 July. Stocking test centers must submit a report on the exams stocked; a negative inventory report is not required for the quarterly report.

50 LCC-ST exams available

Good news! The Liaison Council on Certification for the Surgical Technologist (LCC-ST) presents a great deal for the first 50 eligible military candidates. LCC-ST changed their testing vendor from Assessment Systems Incorporated (ASI) and now works with Prometric for computer-based testing (CBT) or the Chauncey Group International (CGI) for the paper and pencil test version of their exams.

Ms. Dawn Vincent, Executive Director of LCC-ST, offers paperless vouchers to 50 eligible military candidates willing to test at a national center or through a DANTES authorized center. This first-come, first-served special offer goes to each applying and approved military candidate. LCC-ST waives the candidate's application and test fees. Usually the fees total \$149.

DANTES receives many inquiries about LCC-ST funding. Spread the news about this offer. It ends after

assignment of all 50 slots. For more information, contact Sandra Winborne, Manager, Certification Program, at DANTES, (850) 452-1360 or DSN 922-1360. Reach Ms. Winborne by E-mail at winborne@voled.doded.mil.

DANTES to present at Worldwide DOD Transition Conference

The DOD Worldwide Transition Assistance Program Training Conference is scheduled for 29 July - 2 August at the Hyatt Regency in New Orleans. DANTES participants include Dr. John Gantz, Manager of the Troops to Teachers Program, and Ms. Sandra L. Winborne, Manager of the Certification Program.

Also presenting on the panel are Mr. Steve Halsey and Ms. Laurie Raines, of Halsey, Raines, and Associates, LLC, the group that successfully lobbied for professional certification and licensure benefits becoming available for transitioning personnel and veterans.

The concurrent session for the conference is entitled "DANTES/ Licensing and Certification." We encourage you to attend. To learn more about this event, visit the DANTES web site <http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/cert/index.htm>.

DANTES extends VolEd outreach

Hosting an education fair and need DANTES handout materials...or better yet, need DANTES to set up a display? If so, contact the DANTES Training Team. We will be happy to coordinate shipping of DANTES handout materials or arrange for a visit to your site to share information about the many DANTES programs.

Team members recently attended several education fairs held at the following locations:

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station,
Elizabeth City, North Carolina

U.S. Naval Air Station Oceana,
Virginia Beach, Virginia

U.S. Naval Station, Norfolk,
Virginia

Don't hesitate to contact Pat Landry or Betty Keese if you want to include DANTES at your next education fair or need a DANTES representative to visit your site. They may be reached at plandry@voled.doded.mil or bkeese@voled.doded.mil, or call (850) 452-1732 or DSN 922-1732.

"Communication is the key to understanding."

Training team on the road again...at Hampton Roads

Planning appears to be the key to successful education fairs, and the folks at the five 2002 Hampton Roads Virginia Navy College Rating Partner Education Fairs held the week of 8-12 April certainly did a lot of it!

Multiple E-mails sent to schools, DANTES, and other organizations kept exhibitors well-informed and facilitated preparations. Lists of hotels, directions, base access information, and addresses to mail materials ahead or for delivery by UPS or Federal Express were provided by fair organizers.

On the day of the fair, personnel located at the entrance helped to unload and move materials. One fair organizer even gave exhibitors the opportunity to spend a couple dollars on a sandwich lunch that really hit the spot.

Organization and hospitality made the events a "piece of cake" for DANTES and other exhibitors and very worthwhile for participants.



<http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/bulletin>

ASH FROM 1

to a beautifully renovated facility located at Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

Commenting on the new building and the high caliber of people in it, Col Ash stated, "It is a great honor to be part of such a world-class educational institution. You are strategic to the mission of the Air Force."

Col Ash's appointment as CCAF commander comes after his most recent assignment at Maxwell as the Chief, Professional Journals Division, College of Aerospace Doctrine, Research and Education. There, as editor of the Aerospace Power Journal, he was responsible for publishing the flagship professional journal of the Air Force.

In addition to his editing and publishing experience, Col Ash has been involved in Air Force education and training through assignments as flight and platform instructor, course director, and commander in numerous education and training organizations. He was an associate professor at the United States Air Force Academy and taught at the Air War College. He holds three master's degrees and a Ph.D. in military history from the University of Calgary, Canada. Col Ash was commissioned through the United States Air Force Academy, where he graduated in 1979.

Established in 1972, to enhance the technical and leadership skills of Air Force personnel, CCAF is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. CCAF is headquartered at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.

DISCOVER news

Accountability

We would like to stress the importance of accountability when dealing with the DISCOVER Software as it arrives at your location. Please keep a line of authority from the delivery, logging, loading, and finally storage. Our contract with ACT, Inc. requires them to ship materials with Federal Express. It also requires them to keep a file of the delivery date, time of delivery, and the individual who signed for the package. DANTES funds these guidance tools and the costs involved are substantial. Please make

an extended effort to account for and secure materials as they arrive.

Reports

Centers continue to contact us at report time saying their report shows no usage when, in fact, there were users on the system. A small but very important item must be completed in the sign-in or the count will be wrong. The individual **must** fill-in an SSN number. Without this item no count will be credited to the system, and hence, will not reflect in our yearly totals.

Important web sites on VA benefits

The web site for VA education benefits is <http://www.gibill.va.gov>. For questions on VA education benefits or policies, there is an "Ask a Question" link on that site.

There are four VA Regional Processing Offices (RPOs):

The Southern Regional Processing Office (RPO) in Atlanta:
<http://www.atlantarpo.net>. E-mail address is atlarposco@vba.va.gov.

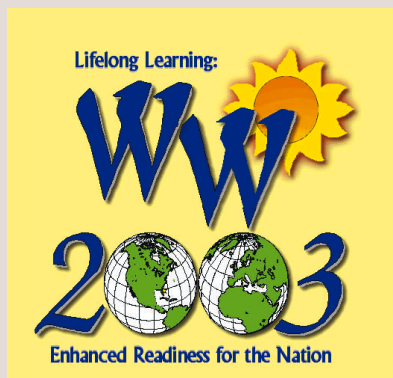
The Western RPO in Muskogee, OK: <http://www.gibill.va.gov/muskogee>. E-mail address is muskrpo@vba.va.gov.

The Central RPO in St Louis, MO: <http://www.varostlouis.com>. E-mail address is stlrpo@vba.va.gov.

The Eastern RPO in Buffalo, NY: No web site. E-mail address is buffrpo@vba.va.gov.

State Veterans Affairs Offices

The web site <http://www.va.gov/partners/stateoffice/index.htm> contains a link to all State Veterans Affairs Offices. Each page shows the benefits provided by each state, as well as their address, Director, etc. On the map of the United States, just click on the state you wish to access.



DOD WORLDWIDE EDUCATION SYMPOSIUM

7-11 July 2003

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& Convention Center
Orlando, Florida**

*For Symposium information, go to
<http://www.ww-003.com>*

From the Advisor's Desk

In the Spotlight



with the DANTES Reference Publications Manager Ms. Sheila Nyjordet

by MGySgt James P. O'Keefe, DANTES Special Enlisted Advisor



Ms. Nyjordet

Ms. Nyjordet (pronounced Nee-or-det) has served in DOD Voluntary Education (VoEd) for over 26 years. She began as an Education Specialist for the Navy in Pensacola in 1973. She was a Counselor at Navy College Offices in San Diego and Norfolk. In Norfolk, she coordinated the ESO Workshop and the Naval War College Non-Resident Program. In 1987, she returned to Pensacola to serve as the ACE, DANTES, SOCNAV, and TA Manager at the Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center. She's been the DANTES Reference Publications and Military Counselor Network (MCNet) Manager since July 2000.

Recently, I spoke with Ms. Nyjordet on her role at DANTES.

Q: "What is the primary function of the DANTES Reference Publications Program?"

A: "To provide reference materials for counselors at all Education Centers within the DOD Services."

Q: "Can you give an example of the types of materials provided?"

A: "They range from college guides and financial aid materials to occupational references and VA pamphlets. We presently have 26 different publications, provided via print and/or online. We also have 22 links to online resources on our Internet Resources on Colleges and Careers web page."

Q: "What is the most widely used reference publication?"

A: "It would have to be *Accredited Institutions of Post-secondary Education*. It provides a comprehensive listing of accredited institutions, which is essential for counselors to ascertain quality and TA eligibility."

Q: "Look into your 'crystal ball' - what do you see for Reference Publications in the future?"

A: "Education counselors will always need reliable, current resources to help them provide quality support to Service members. They will always need reference 'books' in the printed, hard-copy format. But online resources are important, too; I continually search for new ones that are relevant and easy to access."

Q: "What is the MCNet?"

A: "MCNet is an E-mail networking tool for military and civilian education counselors around the world. Its purpose is to share information, ask questions, and provide counseling tips/updates. We currently have 788 members. I encourage all counselors to join this valuable resource. To find out more, go to <http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/refpubs/mcn/index.htm>."

Q: "What is the most rewarding aspect of your job?"

A: "My primary focus is Counselor Support. I enjoy helping others. Researching and posting educational information and counseling tools on MCNet for the DOD VoEd community is fun and rewarding. At DANTES, I feel I'm making a difference."

For more information on the Reference Publications Program, visit <http://voled.doded.mil/dantes/refpubs/index.htm>.

Do you have a Success Story? E-mail me at jokeefe@voled.doded.mil.

ACME highlights CCME

by Pat Landry, ACME Coordinator

The Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) had its beginning in California. A group of Education Services Officers (ESOs) gathered in the early 1970s to exchange ideas on how to best serve the needs of military personnel who desired a college education.

From this early beginning, it was decided they would meet annually in early February. They further decided education institutions providing education for the military, both on and off base, should be invited to send a representative to these meetings.

It was in 1973 that the first annual conference of the California Community Colleges and Military Education Association (CCCMEA) met. At the annual conference in 1994, the organization was renamed Council of College and Military Educators (CCME) to more accurately reflect the membership and its role in military education. The first

conference that was held outside California was in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the second in Seattle, Washington.

It was evident that ESOs from across the nation, as well as educational institutions, were benefiting from membership in CCME. It was also significant that participation from the Department of Defense, Servicemembers Opportunity College (SOC), and DANTES was very much apparent by the appearance of their representatives.

CCME has demonstrated its ability to meet the changing role of military education. With each yearly conference, the organization further refines its approach, recognizing that online transition programs and costs affect both the educational institutions and the military in providing the best possible education for its constituents.

At the recent conference held in Mesa, Arizona, 11-14 February

2002, CCME recognized the outstanding contributions provided by individuals and institutions to military education. The President's award was given to **Tim Scoggins**, formerly USCG and now President of AutoDP Inc.; the John Brian Service and Leadership award was presented to **Darlene Doran-Jones**, Army ESS, Defense Language Institute, Monterey, California and **Warrant Officer Ricardo (Rick) Izquierdo**, ESO, USS Constellation; the William E. Kennedy Award was presented to **Tony Digiovani**, CEO of the University of Phoenix online program; and the Institutional Award was presented to **Webster University**.

Congratulations to these recipients who have upheld the tradition of exceptional advancement in education for the armed forces.

Visit CCME online at <http://www.ccmeonline.org>.



Newcomer's Breakfast at the conference in Mesa, Arizona



DANTES Information

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The Secretary of the Navy has determined this publication necessary in the transaction of business required by law of the Department of the Navy. Funds for printing this publication have been approved by the Navy Publications and Printing policy committee.

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